

MISREADING PALESTINE

More worryingly from the perspective of monopoly power, the Palestinian resistance is not alone. It is part of a regional populist resistance enfolding the poorest people on Earth.



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Originally published in *Ebb Magazine* Issue 1, 'For Palestine,'
January 2024

Cover by Nougat

the sun rising in the East that the u.s., the UK, Germany, France, and their Gulf and Arab satraps would converge on support for 'israel' as the spear's tip of the assault on the surrounding Arab popular militia.

And because 'israel' is the keystone of the regional imperialist order—maintained not by hegemonic consensus but the brutality of Apaches and Merkavas—it is as natural as water falling from clouds that what has developed in the Gaza Strip, as soon as it mobilized politically and militarily, would incite the Western reaction to wipe it from the face of the Earth and impose unimaginable horror to terrify the Palestinian, Arab, and Third-World people to never again raise their heads.

The October 7 operation has perhaps overcome the central role of the 'israeli' state in accumulation on a world scale: ingraining a state of defeat amongst the Arab working classes, as part-and-parcel of the post-Soviet ideological defeat imposed by capital upon labor globally. Deterrence is the form that defeat takes when pushed to the military plane, and 'israel' openly admits that its deterrence has been shattered.

Seen from this perspective, the risks run by the Western capitalist states—their imposition of fascist regulation against freedoms of speech and assembly, their backing for genocide, their desperation to see the Palestinian armed militia wiped from the face of the Earth—is logical, reasonable, and rational in its sociopathy. It is the logic of monopoly attempting to defend itself and the consciousness which bodyguards it with fire from the sky. It is a logic which fills graveyards, and a logic which makes orphans, and it is a logic which might yet meet its end in that crossroads of continents—that salient, and city and their camps and their people.

The recent period has seen the bloom of two falsehoods, stemming from the same root of irrationality, glibly ahistorical narratives, and disinterest in understanding struggles for national liberation against imperialism. One: Benjamin Netanyahu more-or-less conspired with Hamas to maintain the Palestinian national division and empowered the movement in Gaza. Two: 'israel' and its parasitic lobby drive amerika into irrational warmongering.

'The Lobby' made us do it is nothing new. It has been a cheap lie sold by the Gulf ruling classes to cover up their profitable integration into the u.s. defence-financial umbrella, by counter intelligence-funded anti-semites sent to destroy the Palestine movement, by Nazis, by the u.s. strategic professoriate like John Mearsheimer worrying about amerikan decline, and recently in the *New Left Review's* warning that support for 'israel' "has historically exceeded any reasonable political calculus." (When did Marxists decide it is their job to whisper to the exterminationist class that their calculus is off?)

The 'Netanyahu courted Hamas' fairy-tale is newer, an odd chimera of the older truth that 'israel' and the u.s. preferred Hamas—but, seldom mentioned, also Fatah—to Marxist-led Palestinian forces in the 1980s, and the newer truth that Netanyahu made deals that had allowed Hamas some financial manoeuvring space since 2014. We may later consider the origins of each trope. For now, let us consider their content.

'israel,' pound for pound, is the best investment the u.s. has ever made. 'israel' is the purest expression of Western power, combining militarism, imperialism, settler colonialism, counter-insurgency, occupation, racism, instilling ideological defeat, huge profitable war-making and high-tech development into a manticore of destruction, death, and mayhem. From 'israel's' victory in the 1948–1949 war, u.s. planners saw the entity as a regional military power that could contain Arab military and

political ambitions. Amidst France's imperial sunset in the Arab region, the country aligned with 'israel'—trying to deliver a blow to Nasserist Egypt through the 1956 Tripartite Aggression with Britain and 'israel,' and armoring zionism for its successful 1967 war against radical Arab nationalism in the frontline states. Greenlit by the u.s., the war left the Syrian Ba'athist fusion of Arab nationalism and Marxist-Leninism in shambles and slammed the Nasserist national development project. 'israel' also became a useful assassin, eliminating Arab radical luminaries from Mehdi Ben Barka to Ghassan Kanafani.

From 1970 onwards, u.s. military aid into 'israel' turned the entity into a unique asset: an offshore arms factory; a regional irritant to Arab peace, stability, and popular regional development; a destructive gyro of worldwide counter-insurgency; a black hole drawing in regional surpluses and devoting them to endless defensive and offensive armament, away from social-popular welfare spending and non-military development. Uniquely, the u.s. allowed 'israel' to keep the military aid partially within the entity, slowly and steadily building up a massive military-industrial capacity. Meanwhile, u.s.-based capital inflows accelerated, taking advantage of 'israel's' highly educated workforce in the defense sector, resting upon super-exploiting the Palestinian colonial underclass in other sectors. In return, 'israel' armed reactionary forces worldwide: from Argentina to Brazil to Chile, helping evade Congressional restrictions on arms shipments to the Nicaraguan Contras and advanced armaments to the South African apartheid regime. On a world scale, 'israel' has protected the political architecture of global capitalism. And its u.s. domestic adjunct, the Anti-Defamation League, presaged wider zionist capitalist investment in repression by carrying out wide-ranging spying on anti-racist, anti-zionist, Arab-amerikan, and anti-apartheid movements.

Throughout this period, the u.s.-'israeli' 'Special Relationship'

Fifth, through these achievements, the Palestinian resistance has been able to present an acute threat to the settler-capitalist property structures called 'israel,' to militarized accumulation, to the world's workshop for counter-insurgency technology, and to the entire architecture of regional repression with its associated petrodollar flows, treasury and security purchases, and arms merchandising. For capitalism is not just the smooth clockwork of accumulation through generalized commodity exchange and labor exploitation, it is the machinery of violence—its technology—which ensures the smooth running of the clock, the thingification of its human elements, the political decisions to maintain and rework the machinery of monopoly accumulation, and the waste of human lives which is increasingly the core Arab input into global capitalism.

More worryingly from the perspective of monopoly power, the Palestinian resistance is not alone. It is part of a regional populist resistance enfolding the poorest people on Earth. Yemeni GDP per capita is \$677, and its 200,000 men under arms have ground to dust u.s./Gulf Cooperation Council mercenary armies in large portions of Yemen. They bear an explicitly anti-u.s. and anti-'israel' ideology, a considerable arsenal, substantial battlefield experience, and a banner of revolutionary republicanism reminiscent of the Golden Age of Arab nationalism. Syria, at unimaginable cost, has isolated u.s. proxy forces numbering in the hundreds of thousands at their apex, maintained state functions, and preserved logistical and material corridors for the resistance. 100,000, at least, are under arms in Hizbullah, now an elite hybrid fighting force substantially more advanced and experienced than it was in 2006.

It is unimaginable that the neo-colonial authoritarian states nor their u.s. benefactor would remotely tolerate massive working-class militia which speak a language of justice and republicanism and raise arms against those states' sponsors. In turn, it is as natural as

First, literally, we refer to the achievement of the poorest and most strategically disadvantaged people on the planet. Within the encircled and immiserated Gaza Strip, many of the Al-Qassam fighters are orphans. Amidst closure and de-development, the popular resistance has been able to consolidate an arsenal and bring 1.5% of its population into a guerrilla force of 30,000–40,000 men that can—man for man—outmatch nearly any in the world.

The resistance, secondly, has alloyed ideological commitment, willingness to sacrifice for their people, and technological ingenuity into armed capacity capable of going head-to-head with a nuclear power from underground tunnels, the ‘rear base’ and physical strategic depth needed for guerrilla insurgency. The concrete is their mountains. From there they have imperiled an enemy with orders of magnitude higher GDP per capita—‘israeli’ GDP is at \$52,000 a year, with arsenals worth billions.

Third, the resistance, in launching its October 7 operation, is an example to the world that post-Soviet asphyxiation and extermination procedures, sanctions and terror lists and aid-based counter-measures, could not prevent the rise of a disciplined and new national movement from raising its head to the sky.

Fourth, the popular cradle brings the word resistance beyond armed men to doctors going to their deaths in lieu of abandoning their patients and women and men in the Gaza Strip’s North—facing white phosphorus rather than abandoning their homes. It is precisely the strength of the civilian commitment to the national project that provokes u.s.-‘israeli’ extermination: “the ‘civilian’ officials, including hospital administrators and school administrators, and also the entire Gaza population” are, as a result, the targets—not out of cruelty but to break Hamas by breaking its cradle.

grew ever-more-intimate as relentless imperial proxy warfare and sanctions—from Libya to Lebanon—tarnished developmentalism, degraded republican aspirations, and often evaporated regional Marxism. Class inequalities widened as the Gulf, Egypt, and Lebanon became nodes of regional and global accumulation. The ‘israeli’ option for boosting worldwide accumulation through wars on republicanism and revolution served the u.s. ruling class well.

The ‘peace process,’ known as Oslo, imposed after the fall of the USSR and the encirclement of Ba’athist Iraq, sought neo-colonial neoliberalism under military occupation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as part of the post-Soviet attempt to crystallize ‘the end of history’ through neutralizing or evaporating remaining sources of friction or strategic obstacles to the u.s. project. Incoming Palestinian diaspora capital alongside a corrupt Palestinian Authority (PA) was the u.s.’s junior partner in the state-building agenda. ‘israeli’ capital became a seamless transnational component of the u.s.’s globalization project, with large elements in burgeoning high-tech counter-insurgency.

Oslo was a legal vector for the growth of the political asphyxiation mechanisms of the so-called terror lists, as the u.s. moved to post-Soviet mop-up operations. The rejectionist forces—those carrying the lion’s share of the current resistance operations, namely Hamas and Islamic Jihad, alongside the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—were placed on terror lists, joined by remaining armed communist insurgencies in the Philippines and Colombia, and practically the state of Iran in its entirety through the listing of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps. Palestinian parties faced the death of a thousand cuts as they hemorrhaged cadre to the NGOs erected by the aid industry. Palestinian development deteriorated into an apolitical process of governance, growth, and isolated project work.

Although throughout this period the u.s. ruling class's coffers swelled and 'israel' became ever more central to global counter-insurgency, wall-building, surveillance, and policing, the u.s. operation failed to close the Palestinian file. Armed resistance, anti-corruption, and a web of civil society welfare institutions gave Hamas the legitimacy to win the 2006 Palestinian elections. Although soon the external political wing would be wooed by the u.s.'s most sophisticated proxy, Qatar, the military wing in the Gaza Strip remained close with its Iranian, Lebanese, and Syrian allies. Meanwhile, the IOF's failure against Hizbullah in Lebanon in 2006 set the stage for the redirection: arming, training, funding, and through the Gulf media, ideological inculcation of sectarian Sunni proxy militias meant to shatter Arab popular consensus around resistance and, since 2011, to set them loose towards the end of regional de-development and state collapse.

Those lines of division emerged openly with the 2011 u.s. proxy war on Syria, the defection of Hamas' political leadership from Damascus to Qatar, and the u.s. aim to gut the armed regional asymmetric resistance movements, while sanctioning and making open warfare, whether through proxy arming of the Free Syrian Army or other militia, or directly, on their state sponsors and logistical backbones—Iran and Syria.

12 years of regional warfare, 100,000s of Arabs dead, Yemeni and Syrian cities bombarded and burnt out, and four wars in the Gaza Strip—2008/9, 2012, 2014, 2021—led up to the October 7 attacks. Within the Gaza Strip itself, the resistance made the case to the population that they were a political externality to Saudi/'israeli'/u.s. rapprochement and normalization. That no one was going to do anything for Gaza unless they did something for themselves. That the siege was filling every horizon.

The 'Netanyahu enabled Hamas' distortion rests on the correct statement that Netanyahu dealt indirectly with Hamas via Qatar

and allowed the formation of a permit regime for Palestinian Gaza guest workers. This was meant to ensure relative quiet in the South. Far from Hamas collaborating with Netanyahu, or policing the ceasefire, this set-up was an achievement of the Palestinian resistance, allowing it the appearance of political stillness on its surface waters while underneath it moved fast and built up a deep defensive infrastructure. The lie is meant to suggest that Hamas' strength is due to conspiracy with 'israel,' when Hamas simply expresses the nationalist aspirations of the Palestinian people.

This tall tale has also suggested that Netanyahu wished to avoid direct talks with the PA in Ramallah towards a peace agreement. The lie is the implication that the neo-colonial PA is a force for state building and Palestinian sovereignty. In fact, it is the velvet—more often these days, mailed—gauntlet of neo-colonial collaboration in the West Bank, amidst PA coordination with 'israel' and the murder of anti-collaborationist cadre like Nizar Banat in 2021. It is also legible only against the background of Qatar's creeping normalization with 'israel' and its regional agenda of a sophisticated defanging of the resistance project.

This brings us to October 7, and to examining what has developed in the popular cradle of the Gaza Strip and in the surrounding societies. Within each of them, there are growing anti-systemic or pro-sovereign militia and republican armies arrayed from Lebanon to Iraq, Yemen to Iran. As Al-Amjad Salama notes, "one of the fundamental factors we observe when examining the resistance forces across the region is the popular embrace...a form of resource mobilization," adding that "one of the most crucial aspects of mobilization for the forces in the resistance axis is the mobilization of material resources," especially human beings.

What is this force, these human beings, referred to in this word—resistance?